

DC Bicycle Advisory Council

March 2, 2005

MINUTES

Members in Attendance

Amy Nevel
Chris Craig
Dan Barry
Jim Sebastian
Lt. Byron Hope
Rudi Schreiber
Lyn Stoesen
Julie Eisenhardt
Ellen Jones
Jeanie Osburn

Approval of Minutes

Rudi Schreiber opened the meeting with the approval of the January minutes. Members reviewed them during introductions and voted their approval.

Lincoln Circle/Washington Monument Updates

Alexa Viets from the National Park Service gave a status report on the Lincoln Memorial Circle roadway project. A new sidewalk will be poured in about a week. During this time the temporary trail in the area of Ramp B and 23rd St south will continue to be used. The visitor services center will be the next phase. The east side of the memorial will have a system of bollards, but she is unsure of their design.

The full opening of the Washington monument grounds will take place later in the year. At that time, fences will be removed along the 15th St sidewalk and on the south side between Independence and 17th.

Eric Gilliland inquired about the DC Visitor Transportation Study. At this time Alexa only had information on the blue tour mobiles. Their current contract expires in 2007; NPS is considering other options. The study is available on the NPS website: <http://www.nps.gov>

Project/Program Updates

Mr. Sebastian gave an update of DDOT bicycle program projects.

BIKE PLAN: The bicycle master plan is finished. The next step is to submit it to the Mayor and City Council for review and adoption. Chris Craig asked if there were any bumps in the process. Mr. Sebastian said no, the Council and Mayor were only waiting for it to be completed. The final plan will be available on the DDOT website in the next couple of weeks.

BIKE LANES: DDOT has added 15 miles of bike lanes in the past 3 years. Before this time, the city had 2 miles of bike lanes. While a significant improvement, this is short of the aggressive goal of 50 miles of bike lanes by 2005. The objective is to add 10 miles per year for the next 2 years. When the master plan goal of 60 miles is reached approximately 5% of city streets will have bike lanes.

Ellen Jones asked about E St striping. Jim said it is on the schedule but the exact timing is still unknown.

Chris Craig noticed the lanes on 9th St by the FBI building; he could see the lane now that the parked cars are gone. Mr. Sebastian said that the lane has been in existence for a while – only one block – but is usually obstructed by FBI employee’s cars. Ellen Jones added that DDOT director Dan Tangherlini proposed testing a curbside transit lane on 9th street, from the convention center to Pennsylvania Ave. This will be a shared bus/bike lane. Doug Noble is the contact for this project. Eric Gilliland mentioned that the bus/bike lanes are a new idea in terms of the bike plan. Mr. Sebastian said the plan has bus/bike lanes but they are not pictured on the map. This could be a good test of the functionality of the shared lanes.

Julie Eisenhardt asked about the Columbia Road bike lanes: since these were temporary (and only on two blocks) would DDOT go ahead with the next two blocks soon? Mr. Sebastian replied that bicycle counts were conducted but we still need an evening count before moving forward.

Jeanie Osburn asked about the bad surface of Q St from east of 14th Street. She wondered why the road surface was left in poor condition after new sidewalks and curbs were installed. Jim Sebastian said DDOT will be striping the Q St lane eastward from 14th St to Rhode Island Ave. He also commented that rush hour parking restrictions were removed on R St to get a wide bike lane that now runs from 8th St to Connecticut Ave. Jeanie also brought up the particularly awful surface quality of Rhode Island Ave from 6th St to North Capitol St (especially on the north side of the street). Ellen Jones offered an explanation. She said that the same thing happened on Livingston St, NW. New sidewalks & curbs were installed but the street was not resurfaced until they replaced aging (probably lead) water pipes. Mr. Sebastian added that the DDOT website has street resurfacing information, although it is not usually up-to-date or accurate. Amy asked if the Council should look out for streets that are wide enough for bike lanes and are being resurfaced, particularly if they are on the bike plan. Jim said this would be helpful.

BIKE RACKS: DDOT has installed 230 racks in the last two years. He explained that the bicycle program surveys areas that are requested and that exact addresses are nice but not necessary. Liam Healy mentioned that the Capitol Hill racks are well-used. Amy Nevel asked about installing racks at 19th & L, NW. Mr. Sebastian replied that this is within the Golden Triangle BID. They have their own rack design and manage the installations. Eric Gilliland asked about placing racks in Georgetown. Jim mentioned the limited space on M St and that the Old Georgetown BID must agree to the style and location. However, the manager of the Georgetown Lowe's Cinema on K St has approved installing two racks. DDOT is waiting on the approval of both the Olde Georgetown BID before contacting the property manager for approval.

BIKE ROUTES: The bicycle program has signed 10 miles—two existing routes—in the last year. These routes run from Dupont Circle to Chevy Chase, MD and the National Mall to Anacostia. DDOT is currently working on a downtown Anacostia to Brookland route. He also noted that 150 miles of routes are proposed in the bicycle master plan.

ROCK CREEK and ROSE PARK TRAILS: While two distinct but nearby areas, they are one project in the scope. The project consists of realignment and resurfacing with a new crossing of the creek south of the zoo tunnel. Jim suggested an on-site public meeting to solicit recommendations.

OXON RUN TRAIL: Liam Healy asked about the history of the trail. Mr. Sebastian explained that it was built in the 1970s, is little used, and has not been well-maintained. Chris Craig asked about possibilities for linking this trail with other existing trails, like the Oxon Cove Trail in PG County. Chris Holben, of DDOT, will be focusing on this project within the next few months. He will be attending the next meeting to give a trails update.

METROPOLITAN BRANCH TRAIL: The concept plan and environmental assessment are complete. Chris is waiting on comments from the National Park Service. The section from M to R over New York Ave will open soon. The next section up to Brookland will be finished by 2006.

ANACOSTIA RIVERWALK TRAIL: The 65% designs are done and other Anacostia meetings are taking place. The biggest assembling block of land is on the west side of the river, which will get an at grade crossing of the CSX railroad tracks at Barney Circle.

WATTS BRANCH TRAIL: The trail is scheduled to go to construction this fall. When complete, a trail user will be able to travel from the eastern tip of the district and connect up with the Anacostia Riverwalk. Ellen Jones asked about the crossing under the railroad bridge at Nannie Helen Burroughs Ave where it is very dangerous for cyclists. She suggested installing signage, paint, or other devices to enhance cyclist safety.

UNION STATION BIKE STATION: The station will be located in the west portico of Union Station. A design team has been selected. The next step is to activate the contract and set up community meetings to gather public input. Mr. Sebastian intends to have the station up and running by the spring of 2006. Ms. Jones asked if construction funds were available. Jim said it wouldn't be a problem to get them.

AUTOMATED BIKE RENTALS: The winning bidder for the city's bus shelter contract - Clear Channel Communications - has a prototype model called Smart Bike. Ilona Blanchard asked if we could place the bike rental station on the mall. Alexa Viets of the NPS said they would have to abide by the regulations concerning commercial activity on the mall. In order to operate on the mall, the vendor must prove why it is necessary to be located right on the mall. Then, they would have to be a sole source contract (which, after some members' confusion, it was clarified that a sole source contract is awarded after a competitive bidding process), or the NPS would have to determine the carrying capacity in order to decide how many permits to give out. Mr. Sebastian

suggested that the proximity of some DC sidewalks may provide a just-as-good option as mall placement. Alexa also noted that the transportation study is considering some bike elements.

LEGISLATIVE and REGULATORY CHANGES: DDOT is working with the office of general counsel to make changes to Title 18, chapter 12 of the DC Code of Municipal Regulations (the part that pertains to bicycles). These changes would consist of streamlining the procedure to remove abandoned bikes (dispose of bikes in 10 days), raising the fines for bicycle infractions to \$25, and eliminating the director's requirement to approve bicycle safety equipment. Mr. Sebastian also stated that he is working on eliminating mandatory bicycle registration. However, the MPD has this authority, and DDOT's general counsel must meet with them to discuss procedures for eliminating registration. Amy Nevel said that she would like to know the results of the meeting between the MPD and the general counsel.

KINGMAN ISLAND: DDOT will use some recreational trail money to build a circular trail to explore the island by bike/foot. You can access the island from the Benning Road Bridge and also by two bridges in the RFK stadium parking lot. These bridges are now closed but will be rehabilitated to provide access to the island. Ellen Jones said that a formal pathway will be created through the parking lot to the bridges. A memorial to those who died in the plane that hit the Pentagon on 9/11 will be located near this site. This is the main impetus pushing the completion of the trail.

BIKE MAP: It's at the printer and will be available by the next meeting.

WEBSITE: The bicycle and pedestrian programs website will be updated soon with some bike and ped statistics and safety information.

BRIDGE SIDEWALKS: The VMS contract is ending soon. DPW is willing to take this on and will be walking the bridges in the near future to assess the best method to remove debris (either by machine or manually). They will begin with the South Capitol St & 11th St bridges. DPW (Tom Henderson) would like a list of bridges and trails to clean. Eric Gilliland mentioned that, for reference, all the sidewalks and bridges are listed in the DC bike plan.

SOUTH CAPITOL ST and O ST: There are plans to resurface the service road parallel to South Capitol, near O St. Right now only signs have been added. DDOT will be putting in a new signal at N St. Jeanie Osburn says that the previous divot that had been filled is now wavy.

THOMAS CIRCLE: The circle is now under construction. In addition to standard white bike lanes, this location may get blue bike lanes for extra visibility at high contact points, such as places where vehicles merge. The blue bike lane would alert motorists of these areas.

COLUMBUS CIRCLE: The plans are 30% complete. DDOT may add bike lanes to this area or widen the outside lanes. Amy Nevel said that it is difficult to see the traffic signals when going around the circle. Mr. Sebastian said it is all changing so we should look at the new designs before commenting on existing conditions. Alexa Viets (of NPS) added that she had received a request for better pedestrian crossing at the Columbus Circle crossing, across the internal roads.

STREET SMART CAMPAIGN: The city will be doing a third wave of the Street Smart campaign either this June or the fall. He will be working with Lt Hope or someone at MPD to follow up the campaign with enforcement. Street Smart will consist of bus and radio advertisements aimed at drivers but also pedestrians and bicyclists.

TRUCK BROCHURE: This will be done in the next few days. A safety event may be scheduled soon, possibly at the spot of David van Keuren's death, with DDOT director Dan Tangherlini and the MPD.

Other Issues/Updates

Chris Craig had a question about the distribution of the bike maps. Mr. Sebastian proposed that the maps be distributed at events, at DDOT, WABA, or on request, but conceded the need for further discussion on this matter. Others suggested distributing them at the DMV, metro stations, and free local papers. Liam Healy mentioned promoting the map in an article in the district weekly. Jeanie Osburn volunteered to look into this matter. The bike map should be ready in May by bike to work day.

HELMETS: Lt. Bryon Hope said that the MPD has given out the last supply of free helmets. Jim said he would order more.

Ellen Jones summarized a hearing on speed and red-light cameras in DC. District Council member Phil Mendelson called the hearing, which included a very impressive lineup of residents, national experts, council members, and MPD and other local officials that emphasized the safety benefits of these devices. Ellen encouraged members to inform their council members of the importance of these lights to bicyclists. She suggested sending an e-mail, first reminding them that you are their representative on the Bicycle Advisory Council, then expressing your opinion.

Rudi Schreiber called for a motion to adjourn. Ellen Jones asked that the facilities committee meet just to look at circles before the next meeting. Chris Craig (facilities subcommittee chairman) said he is willing, then he announced that he will be leaving the committee in the next few months due to a planned move to Harpers Ferry, WV. Rudi asked for Jim to send out an e-mail reminding people of their committee assignments.

Eric Gilliland announced that this year's bike to work day will take place on Friday, May 20. He also informed the members that the Montgomery County Council voted in support of a full bike trail along 90% of the Inter-County Connector (ICC).

Adjourned